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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CT, EUR/RPM
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
CENTCOM FOR POLAD, CG CFA-A, CG CJTF-76

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SUBJECT: PRT FARAH FROM THREATENED CIVIL STRIFE TO
OPTIMISM: A CASE OF IMPROVED PROVINCIAL GOVERNANCE

11. (SBU) Summary. Village elders from Gullistan District in northern Farah requested help from the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to resolve extortion, theft, and freedom of movement problems stemming from corrupt and abusive practices by Purchaman District Manager Salim Mobarez. The elders visited provincial government offices but failed to receive help or attention. They threatened armed action, but hoped the government would intervene on their behalf. PRTOff requested provincial government leaders convene and resolve the situation. They agreed to confront the district manager and take action to remove him if required. They also agreed to quarterly visits to each district to listen to problems and help solve them. If this course of action is followed, provincial government capability and reach will be greatly increased. End summary.

Allegations

12. (SBU) Ten village elders representing various villages in Gullistan requested support from PRT Farah June 8 to obtain their civil rights and avoid a violent confrontation. Purchaman District Governor Salim Mobarez was accused of extortion, false imprisonment and ethnic bias. The elders were from various tribes, but predominantly Pashtun, representing the majority tribe of the area. All have business interests in Purchaman. Many of them had lived in Purchaman but were forced to relocate to Gullistan because they were not of Mobarez Mogul tribe. Mobarez had come to the PRTs attention mid-May when he ousted District Police Chief Ramatullah Toawakly after confiscating opium and money in a possibly falsified drug raid. Toawakly came to Farah City to claim his firing was a power play to rid the province of an honest police chief. He accused Mobarez of demanding monthly payments from citizens, requiring one out of every forty sheep from nomads, and one out of every ten kilos of wheat from farmers; he even burned a village elder who would not pay his taxes. The elders claim Mobarez controls more than 1,500 men who must be paid heavy taxes in order to allow them to travel, do business and harvest crops.

Farahs Reaction

13. (SBU) Governor Wasifi insisted Mobarez come to Farah City to account for his actions. Mobarez refused, claiming

rival tribes would ambush him. Wasifi created a provincial commission - including Farahs Deputy Governor, District Attorney, Assistant Director of Education, a judge, and e, and representatives from the governors office - to investigate misconduct in both Purchaman and Gullistan. Wasifis reaction to initial rumors of citizens preparing for armed action was, Theyre a bunch of old women. They wont do anything.

Civil Strife Threatened

¶4. (SBU) Purchaman and Gullistan residents were not impressed with the official delegation and came to Farah City in hopes of GoA resolution. They attempted to meet with Governor Wasifi three times, sent paperwork to the police chief, the NDS, Provincial Council and legal representatives. They brought evidence to the PRT showing Mobarez appropriated over USD 400,000, three farms, and a motorcycle business. They also claimed Mobarez stole 2005 kilos of opium and sold it to Iran for machine guns, RPGs and heavy weapons. They claim Governor Wasifi received at least USD 30,000 in bribes to take no action.

Official Delegation Investigates

¶5. (SBU) Deputy Governor Juma Khan described the official results of the five-day investigation in both Purchaman and Gullistan. They held several shuras in villages,

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attracting from several hundred to approximately 1,500 people. Major complaints were inadequacy of the legal system and rampant corruption. Most praised ousted Police Chief Ramatullah and noted Gullistan lacks effective governmental leadership. They were particularly disgruntled over the perceived lack of criminal punishment. They said they felt very secure, however, from threats from Taliban or other insurgent attacks. They are aware of Taliban and insurgent presence throughout the area, but have adopted a live and let live attitude.

Agreement

¶6. (SBU) The Farah provincial government (Deputy Governor Guhlem Juma Kahn, new NDS chief Nazar Ali Wahidi, Chief of Police Sayed Agha, President of the Provincial Council Haji Basir, Chief of Provincial Mullahs, Mullah Rohami),

, and PRTOffs met the afternoon of June 7. Provincial actors agreed they have been ineffectual in managing district affairs and need to demonstrate more leadership. Recognizing the severity of the allegations against Mobarez, they pledged to confront him. If he will not relinquish his post, the Deputy Governor intends to ask the central government for help. The provincial officials asked that the PRT commander facilitate talks and that he request Mobarez to come to the PRT. The village elders were gratified their situation was taken seriously and action could be forthcoming. They agreed to not to engage in violence, but instead to work with the provincial government. They pledged to hold monthly or quarterly shuras in each district to solicit feedback on district issues. They feel such actions will make the local populace more aware of their engagement, helping to avoid future problems and sending a message to potential insurgents that the government is capable and willing to take action in the districts.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: The provincial governments ability to recognize its own weakness and quickly agree upon a course

of remedial action demonstrates a significant advancement in provincial governance. Its willingness to cooperate with local community leaders, combined with a can-do attitude, bodes well for both increased governmental capacity and district leadership. End comment.

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